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Biri language

Biri, also known as **Yuwi**, **Biria**, **Birigaba**, **Wiri**, **Wirri** or **Widi**, is an Australian Aboriginal language of the Mackay area of Queensland. A grammar of Biri proper was written before the language became nearly extinct. As of January 2020 it has been undergoing a revival for some years.

It was spoken by the Biri people.

Biri	
Eastern Maric	
Native to	Australia
Region	Queensland
Ethnicity	Biria, Kangulu, Wiri, Yuibera, Yilba, Barada, Yambina, Yetimarala, Karingbal, ?Yangga, Gia (Bumbarra), Baranha, Miyan
Extinct	(date missing)
Language family	Pama–Nyungan ▪ Maric ▪ **Biri**
Dialects	Biri Gangulu Wirri (Widi, Yuwibara) Yilba Baradha Yambina Yetimarala Garanjbal Yangga[1] Mandalgu Giya (Bumbarra)?
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: `bzr` – Biri `gnl` – Gangulu `xgi` – Garingbal
Glottolog	`east2716 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/east2716)`[2]
AIATSIS[3]	`E56 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/E56)` Bir `E58 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/E58)` Giy `E65 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/E65)` Ma `E52 (https://collecti`

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Dialects

The Giya or Bumbarra language, spoken by the Gia people, may have been a dialect.[3] Barna, spoken by the Aminungo in the midst of identified Biri dialects, may have been as well. There is some confusion as to whether the language spoken by the Yangga people was a dialect of Biri or of Mbara; possibly these were two dialects with the same name.

Revival

Biri was facing extinction in the early 21st century, but, after a group of Yuwi descendants had worked hard to revive the language, by January 2020 elders were able to conduct "Welcome to Country" ceremonies in language. It was a long process, which included Elders consulting with the State Library of Queensland, working on building word lists and developing a dictionary. The organisation First Languages Australia lends support.[4]

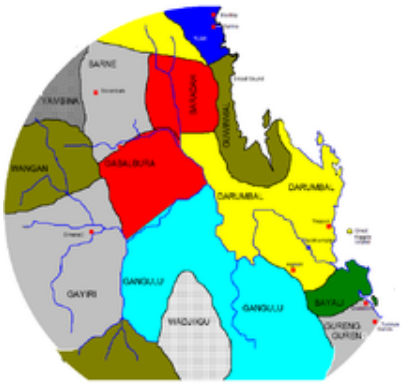
Phonology

Sounds

	Labial	Velar	Dental	Palatal	Alveolar/ Retroflex
Stop	b	g	ḍ	ɟ	d
Nasal	m	ŋ	ṇ	ɲ	n
Lateral					l
Rhotic					r
Approximant	w			j	ɻ

Vowels are noted as /a, i, u/.[5]

on.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/E52) Yai



Map of traditional lands of Aboriginal people around Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone in Queensland

References

1. RMW Dixon (2002), *Australian Languages: Their Nature and Development*, p xxxiii
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Eastern Maric" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/east2716). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. E56 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/E56) Biri at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (see the info box for additional links)
4. Maddison, Melissa; Wykeham, Ollie (13 January 2020). "How Welcome to Country helped save the Yuwi language from the brink of extinction" (https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-13/traditional-language-recovered-and-used-in-welcome-to-country/11846940). *ABC News*. Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved 13 January 2020.
5. Terrill, Angela (1998). *Biri*.

External links

- Bibliography of Barada language and people resources (http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/barada.pdf), at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Bibliography of Biri people and language resources (http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/biri_birri_gubba.pdf), at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Bibliography of Gangulu people and language resources (http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/collections/language_bibs/gangulu_kanolu.pdf), at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- First Languages Australia (https://www.firstlanguages.org.au/)

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